

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

THE BASICS

FOUNDATION OF MEDICAL WORDS

A. Structure

Most medical words are composed of two or more terms. To define a medical word:

- divide the word into its terms
- analyze the terms
- define the word

Examples:

Pericarditis

peri = around, *card* = heart, *itis* = inflammation
 Inflammation around the heart

Oncology

onc = tumor, *olog* = study of
 Study of tumors

B. Terms

Term + Term (____ + ____) = medical word

There are five categories of terms:

1. Prefix - beginning of a word

(ex., *pre*, *post*)

Designated by a "____" after the term.

2. Suffix - ending of a word

(ex., *ology*, *itis*)

Designated by a "____" before the term.

3. Root - foundation/base of a word (ex., *hepat*, *gastr*)

4. Combining vowel - vowel (usually "o") added to a root (ex., *gastro*).

Use a combining vowel when joining:

- Root to another root (ex., *gastrohepatic*).
- Root to a suffix beginning with a consonant (ex., *cardiomegaly*).
- Combining form + root + vowel (ex., *hepatic*, *gastric*).

Designated by a "+" between the root and the vowel

Examples:

Hyperleukocytosis

hyper (prefix) = excessive
leuko (combining form) = white
cyt (root) = cell
osis (suffix) = condition of

Definition: condition of excessive white blood cells (leukocytes)

Hematoxic

hema (combining form) = blood
tox (root) = poison
ic (suffix) = pertaining to

Definition: pertaining to blood poisoning

TIPS:

1. Some terms have more than one definition. To determine the correct definition in a particular medical word, analyze the other terms in the word.

Example:

Polymyelitis

polio = gray (matter)
myel = spinal cord, bone marrow
itis = inflammation

Definition: Inflammation of the gray matter of the spinal cord. The bone marrow does not have gray matter.

2. Some terms may function as a root/combining form in one word and a suffix in another word.

Classification depends upon the specific medical word.

Examples:

Cytology

cyte (combining form) = cell
logy (suffix) = study of

Definition: Study of cells

Erythrocyte

erythro (combining form) = red
cyte (suffix) = cell

Definition: Red blood cell

THE HUMAN BODY

A. Development

Cells - tissues - organs - systems - organism

1. Cells: Major Components

- Cell membrane
- Cytoplasm
- Nucleus

2. Tissues: Primary Types

- Connective
- Epithelium
- Muscle
- Nervous

3. Organs

- Composed of two or more different tissues
 - Have specific functions
4. Systems: Related organs with common functions
 5. Organisms: A living person

B. Cavities

A space containing organs

1. Dorsal

- Cranial
- Vertebral (spinal)

2. Ventral

- Abdominal
- Pelvic
- Thoracic

C. Planes

An imaginary flat surface

- Frontal - anterior/posterior
- Sagittal - right/left
- Transverse - upper/lower

D. Positions

A reference point for location or direction.

- Anterior/Ventral - front of the body
 Posterior/Dorsal - back of the body
- Deep - away from the surface
 Superficial - on the surface
- Inferior - situated below
 Superior - situated above
- Lateral - pertaining to the side
- Medial - pertaining to the middle
- Prone - lying face down
 Supine - lying face up

TERMS	DEFINITIONS	WORDS
acidic	acid, sour, bitter	acidity
acne	pimple	acneiform
acute/a, acutis	sharp, severe	acute
adipic	fat	adipomectomy
aerob	air, gas	aerophagy
agile	agility, nimbness	agility
algic	pain	algology
ambled	to walk	ambulatory
anomalic	irregular	anomaly
anthracic	coal, carbon, carbonaceous	anthracosis
anthropic	man, human being	anthropometry
astric	astrum	astrology
aphetic	short	aphasia
apic	apex	apical
aqueic	water	aqueduct
astimic	stems, vapor	asthma
baric	weight, pressure	barometer
baric	heavy, dull, hard	barophony
basal	walking	basal
bathic, bathic	deep, depth	bathysphere
biologic, bio	life, living	biology
blastic, -blast	early embryonic stage, immature	blastocyst
calculus	to compute	calculi

caloric	heat	calorimetry
capable	best	capacitance
capacit/a, capis	capable, container	capacitor
cardiac	heart	cardiology
caric	carica, rottenness	carcinoma
-cataphasia	affirmation	cataphasia
cathartic	cleansing, purging	cathartic
cathartic	sitting	acathartic
-cathic		
-cathic		
cavic	tail	cavical
cavic, cavic	hollow, cavity	cavitation
chemic	chemical, chemistry	chemosurgery
chronic	time, timing	chronobiology
clavic	to slope, bend	climatology
-clavisc	sleeping	clavisc
-coma	deep sleep	coma
conic	concession, aware	concession
constrictic	narrowing, binding	constriction
convic	to break	conviction
corporeic	body	corporeal
crisis	crisis, dangerous	critical
crystic	gold	crystalline
cytic, -cyle	cell	cytology
cytic	people	cytology
cytic	to dry	cytotoxic
dilat/a	enlarge, expand	dilatation
diolic	long	diolysis
diolic	pain	diolysis
diolic	back	diolysis
diotic	to lead	diolysis
dynamic	power, strength	dynamometer
-dysic	pain	dysmetria
dysic	bad, difficult, painful	dysphasia
ectic	spicy, prickly	ectopic
ectic	compensatory absence	ectopic
ectic	oil	ectopic
ectic	the correct measure, proportioned	ectopic
ectic	opposite, opposed	ectopic
ectic	equality, equal	ectopic
ectic	irritation	ectopic
ectic	cause	ectopic
ectic	good, normal, well	ectopic
-ectic	to cause, make	ectopic
ectic	happen	ectopic
ectic	feet	ectopic
ectic, fibril	thread, threadlike	ectopic
ectic		ectopic
-form	specified shape, form	ectopic
ectic, fibril	cold	ectopic
ectic	performance	ectopic
ectic	to freeze, congeal	ectopic
ectic	twice	ectopic
ectic	producing, generating	ectopic
ectic	production, formation	ectopic
ectic	produced by, forming	ectopic
ectic, geriatric	aged, old age	ectopic
ectic	step	ectopic
ectic	simple, single	ectopic
ectic	heredity	ectopic
ectic	condition	ectopic
ectic	tissue	ectopic
ectic	intrinsic, constant, numerous	ectopic
ectic	water, hydrogen	ectopic
ectic	treatment, physician	ectopic
ectic	specialist	ectopic
ectic	ion	ectopic

Elements Of Medical Terminology

**Mary Beth Braun, Stephanie J.
Simonson**



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